

BOOK REVIEW

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WORKING TOOLS FOR THE FOUNDING A RESEARCH DIRECTION REGARDING ROMANIAN SYNOLOGY

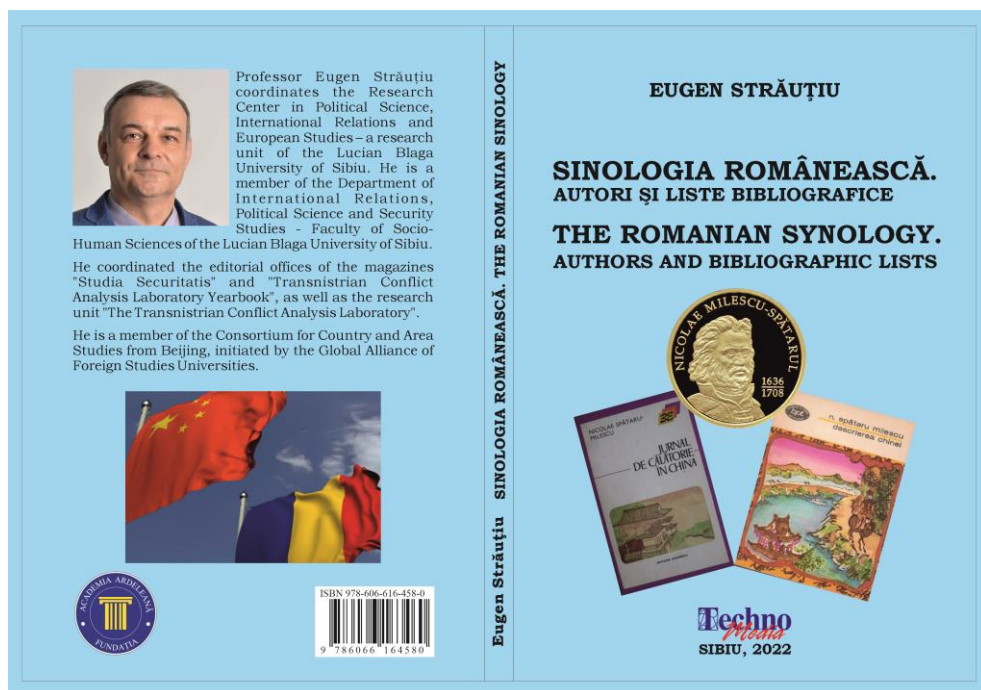
Abstract:	<i>Romanian Sinology (meaning the multi- and interdisciplinarity scientific research of the Chinese world) has not been investigated so far, in terms of authors, currents of thoughts, resources, and the cultural and socio-political consequences generated. Eugen Străuțiu's book "Romanian Sinology – authors and bibliographic lists" offers the first synthetic image of publishing books, studies, articles, and scientific reports in Romanian, with Romanian or foreign authors, who address general or specialized topics, photographing and explaining Chinese space.</i>
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In recent years, the Center for Research in Political Science, International Relations and European Studies, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, has provided national and international research with several working tools helpful in opening new topics and research directions in international relations and regional studies. We mention the books offered by Mihai Melinte and Eugen Străuțiu – respectively a chronology and a bibliography of the Transnistrian conflict, which created the context of ideas, as well as an institutional framework for an implementation of a bibliographic information service within the complicated Transnistrian issue¹.

In a similar vision, aiming to substantiate a research direction on Romanian scientific expertise on the internal organization of the Chinese

¹ *LACT inaugurează un serviciu de informare bibliografică*, <https://lact.ro/lact-inaugureaza-un-serviciu-de-informare-bibliografica>, (01.06.2022)

society and the international evolution of the Chinese state, Eugen Străuțiu offers us the printed form of the work “Romanian Sinology – authors and bibliographic lists” (The Romanian Sinology – Authors and Bibliographical Lists), Techno Media Publishing House from Sibiu¹.



The book, totaling 180 pages, offers versions in Romanian and English, according to a table of contents structured as follows: What is, what is not, and what should be the "Sinology"; Romanian Sinology; authors, guidelines, trends (Nicolae Spătaru Milescu and the birth of the Romanian Sinology; From the First to the Second World War; Te communist regime years; The democratic regime era; Some conclusions); Research methodology (Why cannot we propose complete research?; What are we investigating?; Criteria for selecting the bibliographic items; Content structuring; Methodology for selecting the bibliographic items; Citation Rules); Analytical volumes (Romanian authors; Translations); Working tools; Book Chapters; Papers; Studies and reports; Journals; Small dictionary of Romania Sinologists).

¹ Eugen Străuțiu, *Sinologia românească – autori și liste bibliografice (The Romanian Sinology – Authors and Bibliographical Lists)*, Technomedia, Sibiu, 2022

The working tool character of the book is announced and explained by the author in the Foreword: "First of all, write an honest balance sheet, as complete as possible. By describing and understanding the current state of a scientific field, depending on its strengths and weaknesses, realistic projects can be done for its future development. The energies can be mobilized correctly - whether we train researchers, choose the research topic, or design institutional and material resources"¹.

However, it is overcome by a substantial theoretical approach, necessary even when defining terms. A complex and precise discussion also offers fixed points and nuances regarding the concept of "Sinology", as it appears in Romanian dictionaries and several reference dictionaries in the West. The author notices and explains the phenomenon of excluding "institutions" from recent Romanian definitions, as opposed to classical Romanian and Western approaches.

A second introductory discussion calls into question the obligation to know the "Chinese language" to do research in various fields, directions, and topics specific to the Chinese world. The author's conclusions lead to the relativization of this obligation - as long as the classical works of Chinese culture and research are translated into national languages, contemporary. Chinese authors write in a language of international circulation, and computer technology provides applications closer to perfection both for translation and interpretation.

The third introductory discussion brings to light one author's right to be qualified as a "sinologist". It is the aforementioned author's opinion that a tourist offering traveling tips in China, a diplomat who writes a journal about their mission, or a journalist compiling news and writing editorials for the editorial board they work at are not sinologists. To be a sinologist means doing research work, with a specific methodology (mentioning and verifying the bibliographical sources, consistent use of one or more sciences' methodologies, including certification through degrees and other documents attesting to research aptitude, is a must).

The biographical lists, organized by content, give the illusion of a rich and diverse treasure, that starts with Nicolae Milescu Spătarul (1636-1708) and increased rapidly as our days grew closer. From Milescu Spătarul's encyclopedical approach, nowadays the research is more specialized and it is done multi- and interdisciplinary, with information from history, cultural studies, economical sciences, political sciences, sociology, security studies, and many more. The general impression is that

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 7

Romanian sinology has been around for many decades, without being aware of itself, without properly bringing scientists together (which were uncoordinated and disseminated in their work), and without generating domains, directions, and general areas of research.

This threshold can be passed with the contribution of Eugen Străuțiu's volume, which pictures, systematizes, and even generally explains the Romanian sinological production. Some brief ideas about what should be done are expressed in the conclusions. To sum up, "let's develop as much knowledge of the Chinese world as possible; to build cultural, economic, political bridges. If politics do not prioritize the relationship with China, let us do it anyway - based on academic autonomy and the researcher's freedom to set the themes of his work. Let's invite Chinese researchers to the boards of our journals to our conferences; to write articles and studies with us, for us, in our interest. Let's do projects in cooperation. Let us be present in the Chinese world, with our Romanian point of view - to obtain benefits from this relationship for our people"¹.

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¹ *Ibidem*, p. 66